GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5678
ANSWERED ON:07.04.2017
Mercury based Thermometers and BP Measuring Devices
Ahmed Shri Sultan

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has proposes to do away with mercury based thermometers and BP measuring machines;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for replacement/ban of existing machines considering large-scale avoidable expenses;

(d) the extent of environmental damage caused due to mercury based machines;

(e) whether certain exemptions have been made in this regard; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the likely environmental damage that may be caused by such exemptions?

Answer

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)

(a) & (b): Yes. Government of India has signed the Minimata Convention on Mercury and a resolution has been taken for phasing out of mercury BP instruments, Thermometer and Dental Amalgam by 2020. The Government of India's strategy for phasing out and guidelines have been given to all the Central Government Hospitals and States/UTs have also been requested for phasing out of these products by 2020.

(c) & (d): Exposure to mercury during pregnancy poses risk to the foetus and growth of the baby. Mercury can cause damage to the central nervous system in growing children and can also lead to malformation in new born babies. Elemental mercury vapors are colorless and odorless and very toxic when inhaled. Mercury is a potent neurotoxin, a global priority pollutant and a persistent bio-accumulative. It persists in the environment for a long time, and it is extremely toxic in small amounts. Exposure to mercury impacts central and peripheral nervous system and can damage the brain, spinal cord, kidneys, eyes and liver. Mercury can cross the placenta, passing from mother to unborn child, where it can impact neurological development of the foetus.
(Source: Internet, CPCB guidelines on 'Environmentally Sound Management of Mercury Waste Generated from the Health Care Facilities', 31st January, 2012)

(e) & (f): The information about exemptions in this regard is not available.